SCREAM
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1973
INSIDE--VAMPIRES!
WEREWOLVES!
AND FEAR!
A SKYWALD
HORROR-MOOD
PUBLICATION

in this ≷WEIRD≷ issue

THE WEIRDEST CLASSIC TALE OF HORROR EVER WRITTEN

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

by GASTON LEROUX
illustrated by JESUS DURAN

a tale of the TORMENTED DEAD

this extraordinary tale of terror, horror, evil, madness, monsters, murder, death, disguise, lunacy, strangeness, grotesqueness, torture and namely much ODDNESS is an 18-page MASTERPIECE beginning . . . ugh . . . on page 4 . . .

SCREAM

in this incredible issue :

weird CONTEST : page 53

introducing a brand new horror-mood artist RUBEN SOSA . . . page 45

an illustrated story by EDGAR ALLAN POE page 33

the EVIL ORIGIN SAGA of LADY SATAN . . . page 24

special feature length CLASSIC — THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA . . . page 4

the continuing TALES OF NOSFERATU — *on page 57*

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A SKYWALD HORROR-MOOD PUBLICATION

Messrs. CRYPTS and GRAVES: UNDERTAKERS

NOSFERATU: THE TALE OF ANOTHER!

WHAT IS EVIL and WHAT IS NOT?

PAGE 53 HORROR PREVIEW CONTEST

LADY SATAN

THE FALL OF THE HOUSE OF USHER!

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...THE ATMOSPHERE INSIDE THE PARIS OPERA HOUSE THAT NIGHT WAS ONE BEST DESCRIBED AS WETNESS... IT WAS WET AND WRETCHED OUTSIDE AS THE COSTUMED RICH OF THE CITY COLLECTED TOGETHER AND HUDDLED FROM THE RAIN AS THEY RAN IN FROM THEIR CARRIAGES...

...ONE DID NOT HIDE FROM THE WET... THE VICOMPTE RAOUL DE CHAGNY... HE SHELTERED HIS FEATURES UNDER A MASK SO NOT TO BE RECOGNIZED... SO WERE HIS ORDERS... DELIVERED TO HIM EARLIER THAT DAY IN A NOTE FROM HIS BELOVED... CHRISTINE DAAE...

...THE LOBBY SMELLED AND WAS DAMP... THE WALLS SWEATED... THE CEILING DRIPPED... THE FLOOR WAS AWKWARDLY SOGGY AS THEY TOOK OFF THEIR CLOAKS AND SHOOK THEM, SHOWED THEIR COSTUMES AND THEN BEGAN TO LAUGH AND BECOME DRY...

...RAOUL STOOD BEHIND A CHIMNEY; IT DRIPPED ON HIM... HE PAYED ATTENTION ONLY TO THE RED DEATH'S HEAD WHICH LEERED ABOUT THE ROOM...

...A GROUP GATHERED AROUND A PERSON WHOSE DISGUISE, ECCENTRIC AIR, AND CADAVEROUS APPEARANCE WERE CAUSING A SENSATION... TRAILING BEHIND HIM, EMBROIDERED ON HIS SCARLET ROBE... THESE WORDS WARNED: 'TOUCH ME NOT! I AM ***RED DEATH***'...

THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA

CHAPTER ONE

...THE GOOD... THE BAD... AND THE WEIRD...

ILLUSTRATED BY **DURAN**

WRITTEN BY **GASTON LEROUX**

...***ONE*** TOUCHED HIM... AND AS HE DID A ***SKELETON HAND*** EXPLODED FROM THE CRIMSON SLEEVE, AND VIOLENTLY ***SEIZED*** THE MAN'S WRIST AND ***BROKE IT***... AS HE RIPPED AT THE HAND WITH AN AWFUL AND IMMEASURABLE POWER, HE WHO WAS ***RED DEATH*** TURNED... AND THE DECREPIT, FILTHY GROTESQUERY THAT WAS HIS ***MASK*** BROKE INTO A HIDEOUS ***LEER***... BREAKING FURTHER INTO A QUIET MANIACAL ***LAUGH***... ***CRASHING HORRIBLY*** INTO THE ***MINDS*** OF THE COSTUMED THEATER-GOERS INTO A ***LUNATIC, ENDLESS, TEARFUL, SHATTERING SCREECH***... A TORRENT OF ***OBSCENE SCREAMS*** ***TORE*** OUT OF THIS ***MADMAN***... THIS... ***UTTER... DEGENERATE.***

...COME...
...I MUST HAVE WORDS WITH HIM...
...COME...
CHRISTINE...FOR GOD'S SAKE...WHAT IS THIS GAME OF HIDE AND SEEK ALL ABOUT?... ...WHY ARE WE WEARING THESE DISGUISES AND WHY THIS NOTE THIS AFTERNOON?...WHAT HAS BEEN TROUBLING YOU THESE LAST FEW WEEKS?
...NO QUESTIONS RAOUL...
...CHRISTINE I...
SSSSSH! ...SSSHH MY LOVE...
...IT'S HIM... ...HE'S RESPONSIBLE FOR YOUR TROUBLES ...ISN'T HE?
... NO RAOUL... DON'T...

NO!
WHY DIDN'T YOU WANT ME SO SEE HIM? HE IS THE TROUBLE ISN'T HE... CHRISTINE, MY GOD CHRISTINE... I LOVE YOU... WHO IS THIS MAN TO COME BETWEEN US?... DOES HE HAVE YOU UNDER SOME SPELL?...

I...CANNOT ANSWER ANY OF YOUR QUESTIONS NOW RAOUL...GIVE ME...GIVE ME SOME TIME PLEASE... ...ALL WILL BE MADE CLEAR TO YOU MY LOVE...IN TIME...
...YOU SAID... 'MY LOVE'... THEN YOU DO LOVE ME CHRISTINE...
YES BUT...I CANNOT BE YOUR BETROTHED NOW... YOU WILL HAVE TO WAIT RAOUL... JUST WAIT A BIT...

...RAOUL LEFT HER AND WALKED ALONE THROUGH THE WET STREETS...THO THE RAIN WAS STOPPED THE TEARS IN HIS EYES EASILY MADE SUCH A DISTINCTION NEGLIGABLE...

...HE FOUND HER DRESSING ROOM EMPTY AND DARK... HE LOOKED ABOUT FOR A BIT BEFORE HE HEARD HER FOOT FALLS IN THE HALL, AND IRRATIONALLY, SLIPPED BEHIND A LARGE CURTAIN AS SHE ENTERED...

...NOT LONG LATER HE RETURNED... HE WOULD COMFORT CHRISTINE AND DEMAND AN EXPLANATION... IF SHE TRULY LOVED HIM THERE COULD BE NO TWO WAYS ABOUT THE WAY THINGS SHOULD BE BETWEEN THEM...ONLY ONE WAY WOULD MAKE SENSE... THEIR INMEDIATE BETROTHAL...

...SHE WENT TO HER WRITING DESK AND WROTE 4 PAGES OF NOTES BEFORE SHE TURNED UP HER HEAD AND SOFTLY SANG THE LOVE SONG FROM THE OPERATTA 'ROMEO AND JULIETTE'... SHE LIFTED HER VOICE HIGHER AND LOVELIER TILL SHE WAS MYSTERIOUSLY JOINED BY A MASCULINE TENOR WHOSE RICH AND ROBUST VOICE CAME FROM THIN AIR ITSELF...
...SHE DIRECTED HERSELF TO A A LARGE WALL MIRROR AND SANG LOUDLY AND HAPPILY... HER VOICE PROUD AND FULL...THE TENOR SUDDENLY STOPPED AND SHE QUIETED AND FOLLOWED HIS EXAMPLE...AS RAOUL BOLDLY STEPPED OUT FROM THE CURTAIN HE HEARD THE VOICE OF THE MADMAN...
...FATE LINKS THEE TO ME FOREVER AND A DAY!
...RAOUL STEPPED TO THE CENTER OF THE ROOM WHERE CHRISTINE HAD STOOD... AND FOUND HE WAS ALONE...
CHRISTINE... WHERE ARE YOU? ...SHE...IS VANISHED... INTO THIN AIR...I DIDN'T SEE HER LEAVE... AND... THE DOOR IS CLOSED... ...WHERE DID SHE GO?

MADAME... I BELIEVE CHRISTINE TO BE IN GREAT DANGER AND I IMPLORE YOU TO HAVE HER MAKE EXPLANATION OF HER ACTIVITIES...
...THE DAY FOLLOWING THAT MACABRE NIGHT HE VISITED CHRISTINE AT HER HOME IN THE PRESENCE OF HER MOTHER... MADAME VALERIUS... HE CAME UPON A CHARMING PICTURE... CHRISTINE HERSELF WAS SEATED BY THE OLD LADY'S BEDSIDE, AND THE LATTER WAS SITTING UP AGAINST HER PILLOWS, KNITTING...
CHRISTINE... IN DANGER?... WHAT IS THIS CHRISTINE?...
DON'T BELIEVE HIM, MAMA... DON'T BELIEVE HIM... I AM MISTRESS OF MY OWN ACTIVITIES, MONSIEUR DE CHAGNY, YOU HAVE NO RIGHT TO CONTROL THEM AND THERE IS ONLY ONE MAN IN THE WORLD WHO HAS THE RIGHT TO DEMAND AS ACCOUNT OF ME - MY HUSBAND! WELL, I HAVE NO HUSBAND AND I MEAN NEVER TO MARRY...
THEN... ...WHAT IS THAT WEDDING RING YOUR WEAR?
THAT... IS A PRESENT...
...I WATCHED YOU IN YOUR ROOM LAST NIGHT CHRISTINE... AND I HEARD HIS VOICE...
FORGET YOU EVER HEARD THAT VOICE MONSIEUR... THERE IS NO MORE AWFUL MYSTERY ON THIS EARTH... SWEAR TO ME THAT YOU WILL MAKE NO ATTEMPT TO FIND OUT... ...THEN... I WILL DO AS YOU ASK... AND WILL SEE YOU TOMORROW...
...HE KISSED HER HANDS AFTER THAT AND WENT AWAY... CURSING THE VOICE AND RESOLVING TO BE PATIENT...

...THE FOLLOWING DAY HE SAW HER AT THE OPERA... SHE WAS STILL WEARING THE PLAIN GOLD RING, BUT SHE WAS GENTLE AND KIND TO HIM, AND TALKED OF THE PLANS WHICH HE WAS FORMING...OF HIS FUTURE AND CAREER... AND THEN SHE PLEDGED HERSELF TO HIM...

...THE DAYS THAT FOLLOWED WERE HAPPY ONES FOR THEM BOTH...CHRISTINE'S VOICE AT THE OPERA WAS NEVER MORE BEAUTIFUL... AND RAOUL WAS IN HEAVEN EVERY MOMENT HE WAS WITH HER...

...ONE DAY HE PLAYFULLY CHASED HER UP THROUGH THE RAFTERS AND WOODED CEILINGS OF THE GREAT OPERA HOUSE...

...AND WHEN THEY CAME TO THE ROOF AND THE SOFT STARS CHRISTINE WAS QUIETED AND AT GREAT EASE AND COMFORT WITH RAOUL... AND HERE IN THE WARMTH OF HIS ARMS SHE TOLD HIM THE DREADFUL STORY:

...WE ARE IN NO DANGER HERE... ...HERE I CAN SPEAK TO YOU AND FEEL FREE TO TELL YOU THE TERRIBLY STORY, RAOUL... IT IS AWFUL...
...ON THE FIRST TIME I SAW HIM I THOUGHT I WOULD DIE!

"...AT FIRST IT WAS ONLY A VOICE, AS IF'T WERE COMING FROM ANOTHER ROOM... IT SPOKE TO ME AND ANSWERED MY QUESTIONS... SOMEHOW, I WAS NOT AFRAID OF IT... THEN HE SANG WITH ME, HE HAS SUCH A BEAUTIFUL AND MARVELOUS VOICE, AND HE COACHED ME AND TAUGHT ME VOICE LESSONS WITH A SPEED AND EFFECT I COULD NEVER HAVE IMAGINED...
...THEN IT FOUND OUT ABOUT YOU AND BECAME SO VERY ANGRY I THOUGHT HIS VOICE WOULD CRASH THE WALLS DOWN... HE TOLD ME HE WAS A REAL MAN AND WAS MADLY IN LOVE WITH ME... HIS VOICE WAS MASTERFUL AND SO COMANDING THAT ONE NIGHT AS I SANG WITH IT IN MY DRESSING ROOM I NEARLY LOST CONSCIOUSNESS... I SEEMED TO GO DIRECTLY THROUGH MY MIRROR... THAT WAS THE NIGHT, I GATHER, YOU WERE BEHIND MY CURTAIN...
...WHEN I SEEMED TO REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS I WAS ON THE EDGE OF A LAKE WHOSE WATERS WERE TERRIBLY BLACK... BESIDE ME HE STOOD -- DRESSED WITHIN A LARGE CLOAK AND WEARING A MASK THAT HID HIS WHOLE FACE... HE TOOK ME INTO A BOAT AND ROWED WITH POWERFUL QUICK STROKES ACROSS THE LAKE... BUT HIS EYES... UNDER THAT MASK... NEVER LEFT MINE FOR EVEN A SECOND..."

"...THEN THERE WAS A DAZZLING LIGHT AS HE STRUCK 'SHORE' AND THE MAN PICKED ME UP IN HIS ARMS AND CARRIED ME INTO A DRAWING ROOM WHICH SEEMED TO ME DECORATED WITH NOTHING BUT FLOWERS... CUT FLOWERS MAGNIFICENT AND STUPID AT THE SAME TIME, BECAUSE OF THE SILK RIBBONS THAT TIED THEM INTO BASKETS..."
DON'T BE AFRAID CHRISTINE... YOU ARE IN NO DANGER... ...NOT SO LONG AS YOU DO NOT TOUCH THE MASK!... ...IT IS TRUE CHRISTINE... I AM NOT AN ANGEL... NOR A GENIUS, NOR A GHOST... ...I AM ERIK...
"...HE FILLS ME WITH HORROR, BUT I DO NOT HATE HIM. HOW CAN I HATE HIM, RAOUL? THINK OF ERIK AT MY FEET... IN THE HOUSE ON THAT LAKE... ALL UNDERGROUND...
...I SLEPT... AND WHEN I WOKE UP I WAS ALONE... LYING ON A SOFA IN A LARGE ROOM... ON ONE SIDE OF THE ROOM WAS AN OPEN COFFIN OVER WHICH HUNG A CANOPY... IT WAS OF THE APPEARANCE OF A BED... AND I HESITATED TO CONJECTURE WHOSE... HE WHO SAT OPPOSITE ME WITH HIS BACK TURNED, SITTING AND PLAYING AN ORGAN WHOSE KEYBOARD FILLED ONE WHOLE SIDE OF THE WALL..."

"...SUDDENLY, I WANTED *DESPERATELY* TO SEE BENEATH THE MASK...AND WITH A MOVEMENT WHICH I WAS UTTERLY UNABLE TO CONTROL, I RAN TO HIM AND *TORE* AWAY THE MASK WITH MY FINGERS..."

"...HE DRAGGED MY BY HAIR AND THEN... AND THEN... OH IT IS TOO HORRIBLE... HE SEIZED MY HANDS AND DUG THEM INTO HIS AWFUL FACE. HE TORE HIS FLESH WITH MY NAILS...HIS TERRIBLY DEAD FLESH!..."

LOOK! DO YOU WANT TO SEE? SEE! FEAST YOUR EYES, AND YOUR SOUL ON MY CURSED UGLINESS!

LOOK AT ERIK'S FACE! ARE YOU SATISFIED? I'M A GOOD-LOOKING FELLOW, EH? WHEN A WOMAN HAS SEEN ME SHE BELONGS TO ME! SHE LOVES ME FOREVER!

PERHAPS YOU THINK I HAVE ANOTHER MASK, EH?... AND THAT THIS HEAD IS A MASK? WELL... TEAR IT OFF AS YOU DID THE OTHER!... I INSIST!... GIVE ME YOUR HANDS!... KNOW THAT IT IS A CORPSE THAT LOVES YOU AND ADORES YOU AND WILL NEVER, NEVER LEAVE YOU... AND WILL NEVER NEVER PERMIT YOU TO LEAVE ME!

...HERE ENDS *CHAPTER ONE* OF THE TALE OF THE *LUNATIC ERIK*, THE *PHANTOM OF THE OPERA*... ...CHAPTER TWO... IS A *CHAMBER OF TORTURES!*

... CHRISTINE'S TALE CONCLUDES... SHE SHUDDERS AS SHE CRIES IN THE ARMS OF RAOUL ON THE ROOF OF THAT OPERA HOUSE... AND SHE SHIVERS... FOR IN THE DISTANCE SHE HEARS THE SOFT SOBBING OF A MAN WHO IS HIDDEN... WHO HAS LISTENED TO THE STORY, AND WHO KNOWS THE STORY IS TRUE... FOR HE... HE IS THE MADMAN WHO IS:
THE PHANTOM OF THE OPERA
AND SO STARTS CHAPTER TWO:
... the torture chamber...

I AM... TERRIBLY COLD RAOUL... LET US GO... ... NOW...
BUT TELL ME... HOW... HOW DID YOU ESCAPE FROM ERIK?...

"HE FLED FROM ME AND LEFT ME ALONE... PRESENTLY I COULD HEAR HIM PLAYING THE ORGAN... HE WAS PLAYING HIS MASTERPIECE: DON JUAN TRIUMPHANT. THAT WHICH HE HAD NEVER PLAYED FOR ANYONE... AT FIRST IT SEEMED TO ME A SINGLE, LONG, AGONIZING, MAGNIFICENT SOB. BUT LITTLE BY LITTLE, I BEGAN TO FEEL THAT IT EXPRESSED EVERY EMOTION, EVERY SUFFERING OF WHICH MANKIND IS CAPABLE..."
ERIK... SHOW ME YOUR FACE WITHOUT FEAR! I SWEAR THAT YOU ARE THE UNHAPPY AND SUBLIME OF MEN, AND, IF EVER AGAIN I TREMBLE WHEN I SEE YOUR FACE IT WILL BE BECAUSE I AM THINKING OF THE SPLENDOR OF YOUR GENIUS...

"HE FELL AT MY FEET WITH WORDS OF LOVE IN HIS DEAD MOUTH... AND HE BELIEVED ME... HE VENTURED TO TAKE ME ON WALKS BY THE BANKS OF THE LAKE AND TO ROW ME IN THE BOAT... FINALLY HE LET ME FREE... HE TRUSTED ME... AND IF HE SHOULD EVER... WELL, IF HE SHOULD EVER KNOW MY TRUE FEELINGS -- I SHUDDER AT THE THOUGHT OF THE CONSEQUENCES..."

...CHRISTINE... ... HOW I LOVE YOU...
NO... NOT THIS WAY... HE'LL SEE YOU... THAT WAY...
WHO WAS THAT?
I... DON'T KNOW... HE IS REFERRED TO ONLY AS ...THE PERSIAN... I HAVE SEEN HIM WITH ERIK... YET... I SOMEHOW HAVE THE FEELING HE IS MORE AGAINST THE PHANTOM THAN FOR HIM...
...THE FOLLOWING NIGHT CHRISTINE DAAE WAS PLAYING IN THE OPERA IN FAUST... THEY HAD PLANNED TO ELOPE FROM THE CITY IMMEDIATELY FOLLOWING THE PERFORMANCE ...BUT AS RAOUL ARRIVED IN HER DRESSING ROOM AFTER THE PERFORMANCE... HE FOUND HER GONE ...AND IN HER PLACE...THE PERSIAN...

WHERE IS CHRISTINE?
...THE PHANTOM?... ...THAT FIEND HAS MY CHRISTINE?...
HE HAS HER...
YES MONSIEUR... AND I HAVE WAITED HERE FOR YOU... IF WE ARE TO RESCUE HER WE WILL NEED THE STRENGTH OF TWO MEN... AND I ASSUMED CORRECTLY, I KNOW, THAT YOU WOULD BE VERY WILLING!
...EACH ARMED WITH A PISTOL... THEY ATTEMPTED TO LOCATE THE HIDDEN SPRING LATCH THAT WAS THE SECRET OF THE MIRROR...
... IT WAS FOUND ONLY AFTER MUCH CRAWLING ABOUT ON HANDS AND KNEES, BUT WHEN IT WAS, THE MIRROR FLUNG BACK TO REVEAL A LONG AND FILTHY CORRIDOR WHICH DESCENDED INTO THE EARTH...
...THEY WALKED THAT DISEASED ALLEY STEPPING OVER DEGENERATED CORPSES AND SKELETONS, TILL THEY CAME UPON A ROOM TOTALLY WALLED BY MACABRE MIRRORS... THERE, IN THE SILENCE, THEY HEARD THE VOICE OF ERIK, SHRIEKING... AND WALKED TO ONE WALL WHERE THEY HEARD HIM THREATENING CHRISTINE...
... YOU MUST MAKE YOUR CHOICE... THE WEDDING MASS OR THE REQUIEM MASS!

REQUIEM MASS IS NOT ALL THAT GAY... WHERE AS THE WEDDING MASS IS MAGNIFICENT!
... I CAN'T GO ON LIKE THIS... LIVING LIKE A MOLE UNDER THE GROUND..
... NOW I WANT TO LIVE LIKE A NORMAL MAN AND HAVE A WIFE LIKE EVERYBODY ELSE... WHY DO YOU CRY? YOU KNOW IT HURTS TO SE YOU CRY!
... WHEN THE MONSTER LEFT... RAOUL CALLED TO THE SOBBING CHRISTINE...
CHRISTINE... IT IS ME... RAOUL...
DO NOT FEAR CHRISTINE... DO NOT CRY... I WILL GET YOU OUT...
SSSSH... HE WILL HEAR YOU...
ERIK IS RETURNING...
I... HAVE DECIDED...
...IF YOU DO NOT MARRY ME CHRISTINE... I WILL KILL EVERYBODY...
I WILL GIVE YOU TILL ELEVEN O'CLOCK THIS NIGHT FOR REFLECTION ... IF THE ANSWER IS STILL NO I WILL KILL EVERYBODY! I SWEAR IT...
WHAT... IS IN THAT ROOM ERIK?...
YOU WANT TO SEE? ... COME AND LOOK...
NO, NO... ...I DON'T HAVE TO LOOK... I JUST WANT TO KNOW...
YOUR FRIENDS ARE IN THERE... AREN'T THEY?...
... WELL, THERE'S NO NEED FOR YOU TO LOOK... ONLY TO KNOW WHAT MYSERY WILL COME TO ANYONE IN THERE... THAT... IS MY TORTURE CHAMBER!

... SUDDENLY THE LIGHTS FLASHED ON... THE ROOM WAS INCONCEIVABLY FLOODED BY A LIGHT WHICH PRODUCED AN INTENSE, SEERING HEAT WHICH IMMEDIATELY MADE THEM GASP AND CHOKE...
... BUT WHAT WAS SHOCKING WAS THE NATURE OF THE "ROOM"... IT DID NOT APPEAR TO BE A ROOM AT ALL BUT A MASSIVE AFRICAN FOREST THAT SEEMED TO STRETCH FOR ENDLESS MILES!
... THEY BEGAN TO WALK... AND WALKED INTO LONG HOURS... WHETHER THEY WERE WALKING IN CIRCLES OR IN A PERFECTLY STRAIGHT LINE WAS IMPOSSIBLE TO SAY... AND WAS IRRELEVANT IN ANY REGARD... FOR THEY FOUND NO EXIT... AND WERE EXHAUSTED NEAR THE POINT OF DEATH...
...AN OASIS!!
... FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY LOOK... ...AN OASIS...
NO... NO...
...NO... IT'S A TRICK OF ERIK ... IT'S ONLY A MIRAGE ... DON'T TOUCH IT... DON'T GO NEAR IT...
OH GOD
...I... TOLD YOU... TOLD YOU... IT'S RED HOT!

...I'M GOING TO BLOW MY BRAINS OUT!
...NO... LOOK... A LATCH... A LATCH... WE'VE FOUND OUR EXIT...
... MY GOD... ...A TRAPDOOR...
... MY GOD WE ARE SAVED BY THE AIR...
...THE AIR...
...WE'RE IN SOME MAD DUNGEON...
... DUNGEON?... ... NOT A DUNGEON... WE ARE BENEATH THE RUINS OF THE VERY OPERA HOUSE ITSELF...
... LOOK... NOW SEE THE GHASTLY MEANING OF THE MONSTER'S WORDS: "I WILL KILL EVERYBODY"...
...THE ENTIRE SUB-SECTION OF THE OPERA HOUSE IS... ...FILLED...
...WITH GUN POWDER!

...THAT IS WHAT HE MEANT...
...IF CHRISTINE DOES NOT CONSENT TO MARRY HIM BY ELEVEN O'CLOCK HE WILL KILL EVERYBODY IN THE OPERA... ...WHAT TIME IS IT?
...GOD... ...GOD IT'S NEARLY ELEVEN NOW!
....!
...YES... CHRISTINE AND THE PHANTOM... WE HAVE MANAGED TO COME BESIDE THAT ROOM AGAIN...
YOU... HEAR VOICES?
...NO... THAT'S IMPOSSIBLE... NOT THAT OTHER ROOM... THEY MUST BE BENEATH THE OPERA HOUSE ALSO...
I INSTRUCT YOU TO CHOOSE CHRISTINE...
...CHOOSE...
...CHOOSE THE CASKET WHICH CONTAINS THE SCORPION AND I WILL UNDERSTAND YOU HAVE SAID YES TO MARRYING ME...
...CHOOSE THE CASKET WITH THE GRASSHOPPER AND YOU, AND EVERYONE YOU KNOW, WILL DIE...
MONSTER!
SO... YOU SOMEHOW STILL LIVE... YOU... AND THE MAN WHO WAS ONCE MY SERVANT...
I AM STILL YOUR SERVANT ERIK... THO YOU MAY NOT REALIZE IT...
...I TRY NOW TO SAVE YOU FROM YOURSELF...

WELL... MIND YOU KEEP QUIET... WHILE CHRISTINE MAKES HER DECISION...
...YOU CANNOT STOP ME... THE GUNPOWDER IS SET TO GO OFF... ONLY AN ALTERNATIVE ACTION BY MYSELF CAN STOP IT...
... I CANNOT CHOOSE...
...I TURN UP THE SCORPION...
...THEN YOU HAVE SAVED YOURSELF MY WIFE... AND SAVED MANY, MANY OTHERS... I GO NOW... IN THE SECONDS REMAINING UNTIL ELEVEN... TO PREVENT CHAOS...
GOOD LORD... ...WHAT HAS HE DONE?...
...HE STOPPED THE GUNPOWDER FROM EXPLODING BY FLOODING THE PLACE WITH WATER... BUT... IT'S RISING TOO FAST... IT'S RISING INCHES EVERY SECOND... HE'S LETTING IN THE WHOLE LAKE... HE MEANS TO DROWN US!!!
...NOT CHRISTINE!!! -- JUST... YOU... GENTLEMEN...

... A CONSIDERABLE TIME LATER, THE PERSIAN AWOKE TO SEE THE VICOMTE DE CHAGNY LYING ON A COT, BOUND, WHILE ERIK SPOKE WITH HIM WITH MORE SANE WORDS THAT HE HAD EVER UTTERED, PERHAPS... IN HIS LIFE...
... WHEN YOU AND THE PERSIAN WHERE DROWNING, CHRISTINE SAID TO ME THAT SHE WOULD BE MY LIVING WIFE... THAT IF I DRAINED THE LAKE AND SAVED YOU TWO, SHE WOULD NOT KILL HERSELF AT THE FIRST OPPORTUNITY... WHICH WAS HER ALTERNATIVE... HENCE... YOU ARE ALIVE...
"BUT THERE WAS MORE... WHEN WE WERE ALONE I SPOKE WITH HER AND TOLD HER I WAS DYING... AND I KISSED HER ON THE FOREHEAD AND SHE DID NOT BALK..."
...BUT I AM NOT DEAD YET... YOU HAVE WEPT WITH ME...
... AND YOU HAVE MINGLED YOUR TEARS WITH MINE...
... TAKE THIS RING WHICH I ONCE GAVE TO YOU... WHICH YOU LOST IN THE FLOOD AND I FOUND FOR YOU...
...YOUR WEDDING PRESENT CHRISTINE... YOUR WEDDING TO RAOUL... FOR I WILL DIE FOR YOUR HAPPINESS... AND YOU WILL ONLY BE HAPPY WITH HIM...
"I TOLD HER THAT SHE WOULD FIND ME DEAD WITHIN WEEKS, AND WHAT SHE SHOULD DO WITH MY BODY... AND THEN CHRISTINE ... MY CHRISTINE... KISSED ME FOR THE FIRST TIME HERSELF... ON MY FOREHEAD..."
... OH GOD... ...I AM... SO TOTALLY WRETCHED...
...THREE WEEKS LATER, THE NEWSPAPERS PUBLISHED THIS ANNOUNCEMENT:
ERIK IS DEAD.

Greetings — this is SCREAM #3, wherein certain DEAD THINGS grope about looking for a place to SPEAK . . . an' the best place to have a RAP is right here on these two pages which are :

LUNATIC LETTERS FROM THE MACABRE

SCREAM

MAILBAG

. . . the letters for SCREAM #1 are pouring in like somebody opened the floodgates . . .

. . . We're pleased here to print, in its entirety, the very first fan letter we received for SCREAM magazine # 1 . . . it's from MICKEY BARRON of Jeff David Road in Thomaston, GEORGIA . . .

" . . . Mr. Hewetson . . . I have just finished reading your first issue of SCREAM and found it delightfully horrible . . . I believe your artists are some of the best . . . the story I liked best was 'I, SLIME' . . . all the others were also great . . . in the future it might be nice to occasionally see stories about the horrors of the future . . . thank you . . . Mickey Barron . . . "

. . . from DAVE SIM of Kitchener, Ontario : " . . . I was most impressed, indeed, with the premiere issue of SCREAM magazine. This book seems to represent a kind of pinacle in the short years editor Archaic Al has been with the Skywald company, and in the Al Hewetson - created - Horror - Mood.

'I, SLIME' was enjoyable mostly for the artwork and use of photographs. Personally I found the idea of the moving slime on the last two pages a little B-movie-like, but, to each his own ! Perhaps the best story in the issue was 'THIS ARCHAIC BREEDING GROUND' which reminds me very much of the Lovecraft-style writing, while the story itself (particularly the diary and discovery of a creature while stranded in the Arctic) bore a striking similarity to Shelley's FRANKENSTEIN. Gual's drawing was both impressive and appropriate for the story. 'HICKORY DICKORY DOCK' was positively superb. More, more !

Your whole issue took me back to the days of pouring over horror comics on a rainy Saturday afternoon. The stories were pleasant reading and pleasant company.

Once again, continued success with your latest magazine and, at the risk of being redundant, more, MORE ! . . . "

. . . a word or two from Booby-hatch BOB BURROS of Brooklyn : " . . . It was good to see Dr. Fredric Werthless get his lumps in issue #1 of SCREAM . . . "

. . . and some nice comments from RICHARD RANN of Oak Park, Illinois : " . . . After picking up the first issue of SCREAM, I knew that this magazine was going to be great and it really lived up to my expectations.

Here are a few comments on the first issue of SCREAM : The cover was really great; one of the best covers you've printed. 'I, SLIME,' was, in my opinion, a very good story . . . I liked the format of the third story — 'THIS ARCHAIC BREEDING GROUND;' the diary form that it was in really added to the suspense.

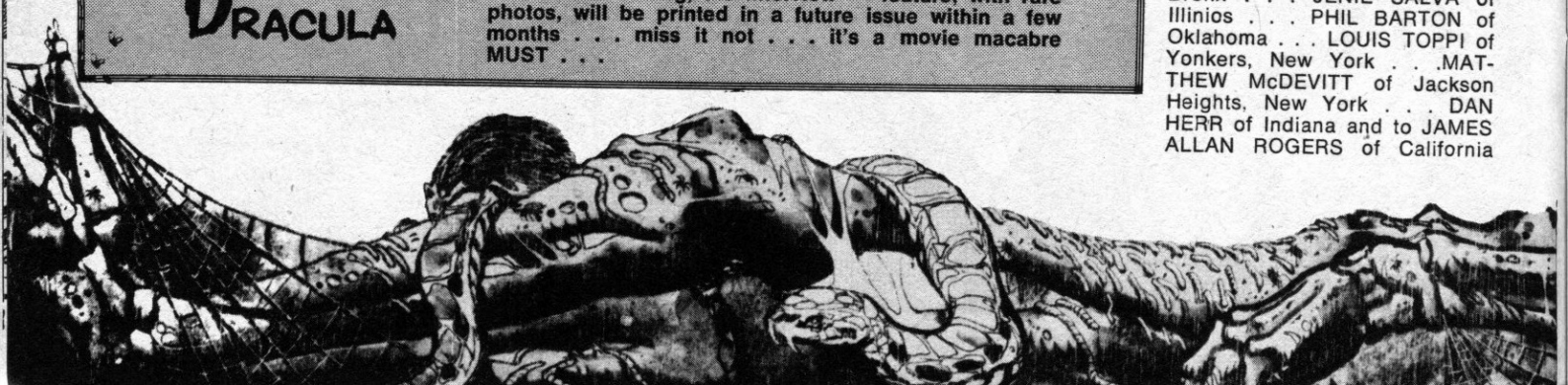
'HICKORY, DICKORY DOCK' was a very outstanding story. A good format, good contents, good art and a good ending. The sixth story 'THE TALE OF THE PERFECT CRIME' was pretty good. 'THE COMICS MACABRE,' was the best story I have read in a long time. I really think that this story was based on an interesting idea. The art was perfectly matched with the story. The ending was really too good for words. With stories like this your mag. is going to really be the best mag on the stand for a long time. The final story was pretty good, 'THE STRANGE PAINTINGS OF JAY CRUMB.'

I certainly hope you would keep up THE HEAP — in Psycho; he is the most exciting character you have created next to THE HUMAN GARGOYLES . . . "

. . . thanks to JOHN MORRIS of Wisconsin, P. BADALAMENTI of New Jersey . . . PETER HIGHAM of Liverpool, England . . . JAMES HEEGAN of New Jersey . . . KENNETH HALL of Texas . . . MARVIN JOHNSON of South Carolina . . . MIKE PARDO of New York . . . DAVID WILLIAMS of Ohio . . . DEBRE STOKES of Florida . . . LARRY DEAN of Michigan . . . ANN MARIE SMITH of Brooklyn . . . REMI YVES BRETON of Verdun, Quebec . . . KENNETH REDDEN of Ohio . . . MANUEL HERNANDEZ of Chicago . . . DOREEN FLANNAGAN of the Bronx . . . JENIE SALVA of Illinios . . . PHIL BARTON of Oklahoma . . . LOUIS TOPPI of Yonkers, New York . . . MATTHEW McDEVITT of Jackson Heights, New York . . . DAN HERR of Indiana and to JAMES ALLAN ROGERS of California

interview with **DRACULA**

. . . we are pleased to announce an EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW with CHRISTOPHER LEE, the man who is DRACULA . . . since we are interviewing him at the time of this writing, the interview — feature, with rare photos, will be printed in a future issue within a few months . . . miss it not . . . it's a movie macabre MUST . . .



. . . DOMINGO ALVAREZ GOMEZ was born in Barcelona, Spain, on the 29th of June, 1942 . . . his genius for painting became evident very soon . . . on the 30th of June, 1942, Domingo was commissioned by Pope Archaicus II to paint the ceiling of the Sistine Chapel in Rome . . . at the age of 4 he was so successful his work was appearing in 31 languages, not including his own, unfortunately, and he was in demand all the world over ! At the age of 5 he contracted a rare lung disease and since that day hasn't uttered a single word ! He comes into the office on pay-day and hands the SKYWALD bookkeeper a little printed card which reads : I AM A MUTE DWARF ! PLEASE BUY THIS BALL-POINT-PEN AND GOD WILL BLESS YOU !

. . . All this is a LIE of course — actually DOMINGO is one of our FAVORITE PEOPLE . . . his work HAS appeared all over the world in many different languages, and we're proud to say he's a MOOD-TEAM REGULAR . . . watch for MORE art by DOMINGO coming soon . . . like : 'THE THING WITH THE RED RIBBON IN ITS HAIR' and 'THE LUNATIC CREATIONS OF EDGAR ALLAN POE' . . . miss 'em not . . . they're GREAT . . . and DOMINGO'S GREAT . . .

. . . this . . . is DWARFISH DOMINGO

for filling in our BIGGER BUNCH OF QUESTIONS and adding helpful, appreciated comments which we have read and will USE . . . thankee people . . .

. . . weird rap folk . . .

R.I.P.

-ARCHAIC AL-

WHAT IS BLACK AND WHITE AND EVIL ALL OVER?

THE VICTIMS ARE!

-AND THEY'RE COMING SOON!

. . . SCREAM # 3 . . .

my favorite story this issue is : .....

comment : .....

.....

name : ..... age : .....

address : .....

city n' other : .....

mail to : SKYWALD BEST STORY
Skywald Publishing Corporation
18 East 41st Street Rm 1501
New York City, N.Y. 10017

LADY SATAN
...ASHES TO ASHES...
DUST TO DUST...
WE COMMIT THE DEAD TO THE EARTH...
...AND MAY GOD HAVE MERCY ON HER WRETCHED SOUL...
OH, GOD...
GOD...
SHE WAS ONLY 23 YEARS OLD...
POOR ANNE...
SO YOUNG, AND FULL OF LIFE...
CHAPTER TWO
WHAT IS EVIL and WHAT IS NOT?
WRITTEN BY HOWIE ANDERSON
ILLUSTRATED BY RICARDO VILLAMONTE

...WHO IS IT EXITS THIS YET-UNSETTLED GRAVE...
...THE MANGLED, BATTLED CORPSE OF A YOUNG BLACK GIRL...ANNE JACKSON
...OR THE AMUSED DEGENERATE WITCH-QUEEN...BLACK ANNE... LADY SATAN...
...WHAT SAY TO IT BEING BOTH?...THERE IS NO NEED TO CHOOSE YOUR PREFERENCES JUST NOW, THO' LADY SATAN IS THE MIND MOST DOMINANT AT THIS OCCULT HOUR, FOR THE FACT IS AS STATED...AS LADY-SATAN. WILL EXPLAIN HERSELF...

LADY SATAN, YOU LIVE...
...VERY ASTUTE, WHELP...THO' NOT ABSOLUTELY ACCURATE IN EVERY DETAIL...
I DIED IN THAT CAVE TWO NIGHTS AGO...OR RATHER THE BODY OF ANNE DIED!
SHE WAS MURDERED BY LUCIFER IN HIS RAGE AT OUR WEDDING BEING INTERRUPTED...
BUT WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU THAT NIGHT, MISTRESS?
I LOST CONTROL...THE DORMANT MIND OF ANNE JACKSON WAS SO AGITATED BY THE SUDDEN APPEARANCE OF HER FRIEND, AND I WAS SO STARTLED, THAT SHE REGAINED CONTROL OF HERSELF AND MY WILL WAS SUBLIMATED...
IT WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN...
BUT HOW IS IT HER BODY LIVES AGAIN?
...THIS BODY IS GRANTED A STAY OF LIFE BY MY HUSBAND, LUCIFER, WHO GRANTS ME THIS BODY. IT'S SO SUITED TO MY NEEDS...
ANNE LIVES ALSO...THO' ONLY WHEN I WILL IT...IF I CHOSE TO LEAVE HER BODY SHE WILL DIE...
...AS I WILL CONTINUE TO LIVE AS AN ENERGY ONCE AGAIN...THUS SHE LIVES AT MY WHIM...
...AND LADY SATAN SHALL CONTINUE HER ACTIVITIES AT WILL...

...HOW IS IT THAT TWO CAN EXIST WITHIN ONE IS NOT UNUSUAL... FOR IT IS THE VERY DEFINITION OF SCHIZOPHRENIA... AND THE PREMISE FOR MANY A MACABRE-DUO-- SUCH AS STEVENSON'S FAMOUS JEKYLL AND HYDE, SEIGEL'S SUPERMAN, OR GOETHE'S FAUST...
...BUT HOW IS IT THAT TWO CAN LIVE WITHIN ONE WHO IS DEAD IS NOT SO RATIONAL...
...AND HOW IS IT THAT ONE WHO LIVED CENTURIES AGO CAN DICTATE THE "LIFE" OF ONE IN 1973 DEFINES THE PHENOMENA AS SUPERNATIONAL...
...THAT IS OUR ONLY EXPLANATION... ANNE'S, TO HER ASTONISHED FRIEND BERENICE WHEN THEY ARE REUNITED, IS LESS-ELABORATE AND MORE TEARFUL...FOR ANNE KNOWS NOT WHY SHE IS OUT OF HER GRAVE AND HAS ONLY SUSPICIONS ABOUT THE DEAD-THING WHO DWELLS WITHIN HER...
THERE'S NO RECORD OF HER BIRTH...BUT A FULL AND DETAILED ACCOUNT OF HER ACTIVITIES AND HER DEATH ARE RECORDED...
...BUT BY LOOKING INTO HISTORY BOOKS SHE HOPES TO FIND OUT BY FINDING OUT ABOUT THE BLACK WITCH-QUEEN OF SALEM...

LISTEN TO WHAT IT SAYS HERE... "THE BLACK WITCH-QUEEN WAS A FILTHY OLD HAG...HER BODY WAS WRETCHED AND DISEASED... SHE LIVED IN THE MOUNTAINS APART FROM THE VILLAGERS OF SALEM AND WAS DESPISED AND FEARED BY EVERYONE WHO HAD EVER KNOWN OR MET HER...
"SHE HAD AN OVERWHELMING PERSONAL POWER OVER PERSONS INTERESTED IN SATANISM AND WITCHCRAFT, AND HAD A HUGE FOLLOWING OF DEVOTED ADMIRERS, MOSTLY YOUNG GIRLS, WHO ATTENDED HER EVERY WHIM AND WERE HER DISCIPLES...
"...DURING THE WITCH TRIALS SHE AND HER FOLLOWERS STAYED IN THE HILLS AND WERE NOT INVOLVED, BUT WHEN THE HYSTERIA ENDED SHE RESUMED HER 'ACTIVITIES' AND HER GROUP BECAME NOTORIOUS...THIS GAVE CONTINUED CREDANCE TO THE LINGERING BELIEF IN WITCHES..."
"...WHAT EXACTLY HER ACTIVITIES WERE IS NOT KNOWN, BUT CAN EASILY BE PRESUMED, FOR ANIMALS WERE FOUND MISSING ALMOST DAILY FROM FARMS, AND IT WAS OBVIOUS FROM THEIR BURNED CARCASSES THAT SHE GAVE THEM UP AS BURNT OFFERINGS TO HER MASTER..."
...YES, BUT LISTEN TO THIS... IT TELLS OF HER DEATH...
...HOW AWFUL...

"...SHE WAS MORE THAN AN ORDINARY WITCH, IT WAS LATER REALIZED, WHEN BODIES WERE FOUND...
...BODIES?...
"...THE BODIES OF YOUNG GIRLS WERE FOUND IN THE HILLS, BRUISED AND BATTERED, ALL WITH PECULIAR PIN-HOLES IN THEIR NECKS, WHICH GAVE RISE TO THE BELIEF THAT OLD ANNE WAS ALSO A VAMPIRE...
"...WHEN THE GIRLS WHO HAD NEVER SHOWN ANY INTEREST IN THE CULT OR IN ANY DEMONOLOGY BEGAN TO VANISH, AND WHEN THEIR BODIES WERE FOUND BOTH BURNED AND DRAINED OF BLOOD, THE CITIZENS BANDED TOGETHER TO HUNT OUT THE WITCH-QUEEN AND HER FOLLOWERS...
"WHEN THEY CAPTURED HER, THEY BURNED HER AT THE STAKE... AND HER CURSE UPON THEM WAS THE MOST VILE AND CONTEMPTUOUS CURSE EVER UTTERED..."
I CURSE THEE AND THY NAMES... THEY SHALL ALL DIE BEFORE THY LIVES ARE FULFILLED... AND THY DESCENDANTS SHALL NEVER KNOW PEACE, FOR AT SOME TIME I SHALL RETURN UNTO THEM ALL...AND KILL EVERY LIVING DESCENDANT OF THEE..

"...AS SHE WENT UP IN FLAMES THE VILLAGERS SWORE THEY SAW HER SPIRIT DEPART FROM HER BODY AND LAUGH AT THEM MOCKINGLY..."
...WHAT A FILTHY AND EVIL PERSON SHE WAS...
...WHAT DO YOU THINK, ANNE?
...WHAT IS EVIL AND WHAT IS NOT?...
ANNE... YOUR VOICE... ANNE... ANNE...
WHAT IS IT THAT BOTHERS YOU, CHILD?... THOSE FABLES IN THAT WRETCHED BOOK?
...FOR IF THOSE FABLES BOTHER YOU DO NOT LET THEM FOR THEY ARE FALSE...
...SKIMPY... INADEQUATE...
...FABLES TOLD BY UNFAMILIARS...
ANNE...

NO, ANNE!
...IT'S BEEN...
...SUCH...
A LONG TIME...
MMMMMOOO
Ricardo Villamonte
...THIS IS LADY SATAN...A MIGHTY AND EVIL MIND WITHIN AN INNOCENT'S DEAD-BODY... ABLE TO KILL AT A WHIM...
A FILTHY VAMPIRESS AND MONSTER... BRIDE OF SATAN... WITHOUT MORALS OR CONSCIENCE... AND NOW, MOMENTARILY SATIATED, ABLE TO VANISH INTO ENERGY AND LEAVE THE INNOCENT ANNE TO FACE THE BRUTAL FACT THAT SHE MURDERED HER BEST FRIEND...

...OR...DID SHE?...
BERENICE... I...I...
LADY SATAN DID NOT KILL ME, ANNE...
...VAMPIRES DON'T KILL...
...THEY MERELY MAIM IN THE MOST DISGUSTING WAY!
...OH, MY GOD...
AAAHHH...
...UGHH! YOU HAVE NO BLOOD... ONLY ROTTED, DRIED MUCUS IN YOUR VEINS...
...BERENICE NEEDED HER FRIEND IN TWO WAYS...ANNE SUBLIMATED, COULD NOT HELP HER, AND ANNE, DEAD, COULD NOT SATIATE HER NEW NEED FOR BLOOD...
...THUS LADY SATAN HAS WON A CRUEL MOMENT OF VICTORY IN DEPRIVING ANNE OF HER SOLE FRIEND AND CONFIDENT...LEAVING HER HORRIBLY ALONE IN HER WAR AGAINST THE ONE WITHIN HER WHO LAUGHS IN HER SLEEP AT THIS BITTER IRONY...FOR LADY SATAN KNOWS WHAT HELL COMES NEXT AS:
SATAN WANTS A CHILD!

...DURING THE WHOLE OF A DULL, **DARK** AND **SOUNDLESS DAY** IN THE AUTUMN OF THE YEAR, I RODE **ALONE**, ON **HORSEBACK**, TILL AT LENGTH I FOUND MYSELF WITHIN VIEW OF THE MELANCHOLY HOUSE OF **USHER**...

...I LOOKED UPON THE SCENE BEFORE ME-UPON THE **BLEAK WALLS**-UPON THE **VACANT EYE-LIKE WINDOWS**-UPON A FEW **RANK SEDGES**-AND UPON A FEW WHITE **TRUNKS** OF **DECAYED TREES**-WITH AND **UTTER DEPRESSION** OF **SOUL** WHICH I CAN **COMPARE** TO **NO EARTHLY SENSATION**...THERE WAS AN **ICINESS**, A **SINKING**, A **SICKENING** OF THE **HEART**...THIS **PERVASIVE**, **FILTHY DOMAIN HARKENED** TO ME, AND THO I KNEW NOT **WHY**, I WAS **CALLED** INTO THIS **PRESENCE** BY ITS **MASTER**, **RODERICK USHER**...CALLED TO THIS **MANSION OF GLOOM**...**ORDERED** HERE THO EVERY **INSTINCT** ORDERED ME TO **TURN** AND **FLEE** ITS **GHASTLY VISAGE**...BUT GOD HELP ME...

the fall of the house of usher

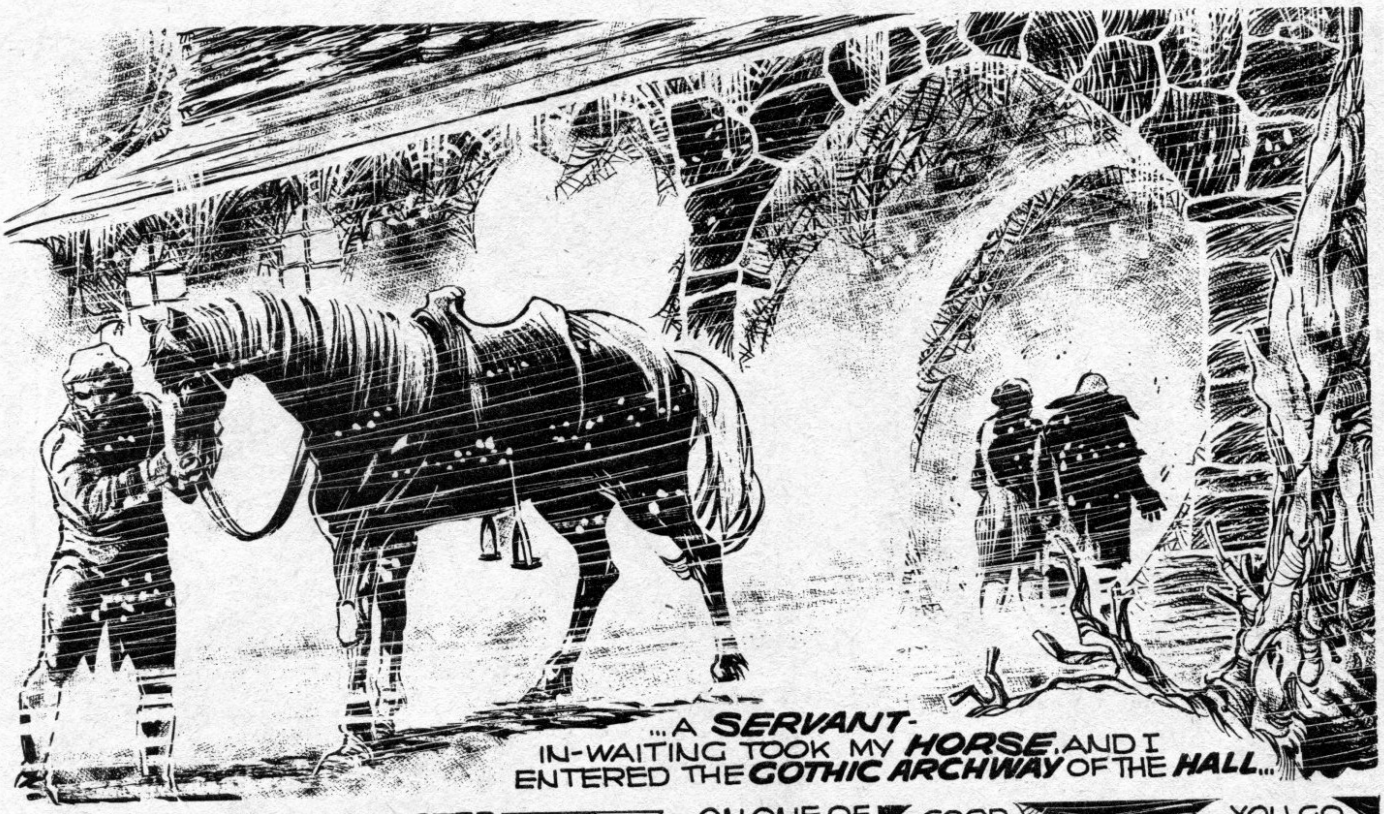
WRITTEN BY EDGAR ALLAN POE ILLUSTRATED BY MARO NAVA

...THE OWNER OF THIS MANSE HAD BEEN ONE OF MY BOON COMPANIONS IN BOYHOOD... BUT MANY YEARS HAD ELAPSED SINCE OUR LAST MEETING... A LETTER, WILDLY IMPORTUNATE IN NATURE, HAD RECENTLY REACHED ME REQUESTING I PERSONALLY VISIT HIM...

...THE MS. GAVE EVIDENCE OF NERVOUS AGITATION... THE WRITER SPOKE OF ACUTE BODILY ILLNESS - OF A MENTAL DISORDER WHICH OPPRESSED HIM - AND OF AN EARNEST DESIRE TO SEE ME, HOPING I WOULD ALLEVIATE HIS MALADY...

...NOW, AS I CAME CLOSE TO HIS ANCESTRAL ABODE, I CAME TO THINK THAT, SOMEHOW, THIS HOUSE ITSELF IN ITS FILTH AND HELLISH ATMOSPHERE, HAD ALMOST EVERYTHING TO DO WITH MY OLD FRIEND'S STATE OF GREAT DEPRESSION...

FOR THE DECAYED TREES REEKED! MINUTE FUNGI OVERSPREAD THE WHOLE EXTERIOR, HANGING IN A FINE TANGLED WEB-WORK FROM THE EAVES... INDIVIDUAL STONES WERE CRUMBLING... OLD WOOD-WORK WAS ROTTING... A BARELY DISCERNIBLE FISSURE EXTENDED FROM THE ROOF TO THE GROUND DOWN THE WALL IN A HORRIBLE ZIGZAG... IT WAS A PLACE CONDEMNED BY HELL - UNFIT FOR HABITATION BY MAN OR MONSTER... AND IT WAS TO THIS PLACE I CAME NOT KNOWING WHY; NOT KNOWING WHAT-WITHIN CAUSED ITS MASTER TO TURN MAD...


...A SERVANT-IN-WAITING TOOK MY HORSE, AND I ENTERED THE GOTHIC ARCHWAY OF THE HALL...

...A VALET, OF STEALTHY STEP, THENCE CONDUCTED ME, IN SILENCE, THROUGH MANY DARK AND INTRICATE PASSAGES IN MY PROGRESS TO THE STUDIO OF HIS MASTER...

...ON ONE OF THE STAIRCASES I MET THE PHYSICIAN OF THE FAMILY; HIS FACE CUNNING AND PERPLEXED ...HE ACCOSTED ME WITH TREPIDATION...
...GOOD DAY SIR...
...YOU GO TO SEE RODERICK USHER?
YES...OF COURSE, HE IS THE MASTER OF THIS HOUSE IS HE NOT?...
...AND MY FRIEND...

FRIEND? ...YOU ARE HIS FRIEND? HOW CAN SUCH A FEROCIOUS MANIC-DEPRESSIVE AS USHER HAVE A FRIEND?...

...YOU ARE CRUEL TO THE MAN YOU ATTEND DOCTOR...
...NOT HALF SO CRUEL AS HE IS TO HIMSELF...
...IF YOUR FRIENDSHIP MEANS ANYTHING THEN I IMPLORE YOU...
...GET RODERICK USHER AWAY FROM THIS WRETCHED HOUSE!...

HE PASSED ON AFTER THIS... THE VALET NOW THREW OPEN THE DOOR AND USHERED ME INTO THE PRESENCE OF HIS MASTER...
...IT...DISPLAYS ITSELF IN A HOST OF UNNATURAL SENSATIONS...
...A MORBID ACUTENESS OF THE SENSES...
MY DEAR DEAR FRIEND... ...WELCOME...
RODERICK... DEAR GOD WHAT HAPPENED TO YOU?
...ONLY THE MOST INSIPID FOOD I FIND PALATABLE...
...I CAN WEAR GARMENTS OF ONLY CERTAIN REFINED TEXTURE...
...THE SMELL OF ALL FLOWERS MAKES ME VOMIT...
...MY EYES ARE TORTURED BY NATURAL LIGHT...
...MOST MUSIC IS ABOMINABLE TO MY EARS...
...I AM WRETCHED MY FRIEND... OH! QUITE WRETCHED...
MY MALADY... MY FRIEND, IS A CONSTITUTIONAL AND FAMILY EVIL...
...I AM DESPAIRED TO FIND A REMEDY...

...I SHALL PERISH...
...THUS, THUS, AND NOT OTHERWISE, SHALL I BE LOST... I DREAD THE EVENTS OF THE FUTURE, NOT IN THEMSELVES, BUT IN THEIR RESULTS...
...YOU ARE A SLAVE... BOUNDEN TO YOUR MIND, NOT THE REAL EARTH AROUND YOU...
...I MUST PERISH IN THIS DEPLORABLE FOLLY...
MY DEAR FRIEND... WHAT HAS HAPPENED TO DETERIORATE YOUR MIND SO?...
...I LEARNED, MOREOVER, THROUGH BROKEN AND EQUIVOCAL HINTS, ANOTHER SINGULAR FEATURE OF HIS MENTAL CONDITION... HE WAS ENHANCED BY CERTAIN SUPERSTITIOUS IMPRESSIONS IN REGARD TO THE HOUSE, FROM WHICH HE HAD NOT VENTURED FOR SEVERAL YEARS...
...I... DO NOT... ADMIT... TO KNOWING...
...I FEEL THAT THE PERIOD WILL SOONER OR LATER ARRIVE WHEN I MUST ABANDON LIFE AND REASON TOGETHER, IN SOME STRUGGLE WITH THE GRIM PHANTASM...
...FEAR...
...HE ADMITTED, HOWEVER ALTHOUGH WITH HESITATION, THAT MUCH OF THE PECULIAR GLOOM WHICH THUS AFFLICTED HIM COULD BE TRACED TO THE SEVERE AND LONG-CONTRIVED ILLNESS OF HIS TENDERLY BELOVED SISTER...
...HER DEATH, WHICH IS IMMINENT, WILL LEAVE ME THE LAST OF THE ANCIENT RACE OF THE USHERS...

... WHILE WE TALKED, THE LADY **MADELINE** (FOR SO SHE WAS CALLED) PASSED SLOWLY THROUGH A REMOTE PORTION OF THE ROOM, AND WITHOUT HAVING NOTICED MY PRESENCE, DISAPPEARED...

... THE DISEASE OF LADY MADELINE HAD LONG BAFFLED THE SKILL OF HER PHYSICIANS... A SETTLED APATHY, A GRADUAL WASTING AWAY OF THE PERSON, AND FREQUENT CATALEPTIC ATTACKS...

... FOR SEVERAL DAYS ENSUING, HER NAME WAS UNMENTIONED BY EITHER USHER OR MYSELF, AND DURING THIS PERIOD I WAS BUSIED IN EARNEST ENDEAVOURS TO ALLEVIATE THE MELANCHOLY OF MY FRIEND... WE PAINTED AND READ TOGETHER, OR I LISTENED TO HIS WILD IMPROVISATIONS ON HIS SPEAKING GUITAR...

...HIS LONG IMPROVISED DIRGES WILL RING FOREVER IN MY EARS... THE WORDS OF ONE OF THESE RHAPSODIES I HAVE EASILY REMEMBERED, FOR USHER DELIVERED THEM WITH SUCH MORBID AND FANTASTIC CHARACTER THAT I WAS CONVINCED HE WAS TOTALLY MAD... THE VERSES HE ENTITLED THE HAUNTED PALACE, AND THEIR LUDICROUS IMPLICATIONS OF WHAT WAS HIS STATE OF MIND ASTONISHED ME...
...EVIL THINGS..., IN ROBES OF SORROW... ASSAILED THE MONARCH'S HIGH ESTATE... AH, LET US MOURN, FOR NEVER MORROW, SHALL DAWN UPON HIM, DESOLATE!...
...IT IS BUT A DIM-REMEMBERED STORY OF THE OLDTIME ENTOMBED... AND TRAVELLERS NOW WITHIN THAT VALLEY, SEE VAST FORMS THAT MOVE FANTASTICALLY TO A DISCORDANT MELODY...
...OH GOD... GOD...
...WHILE... LIKE A RAPID GHASTLY RIVER, THROUGH THE PALE DOOR, A HIDEOUS THRONG RUSH OUT FOREVER, AND LAUGH - BUT SMILE NO MORE...
...HOW CAN YOU SING SOMETHING SO WRETCHED AND DEPRAVED RODERICK...
...IT IS THIS HOUSE WHICH MAKES ME SING SO SAD A LAMENT...
...IT IS THIS HOUSE THAT SO TORTURES ME...
...IT IS THIS DAMNED HOUSE...
...THERE WAS NOW NO-DOUBT... USHER WAS MAD...
...OH GOD HELP ME... HELP ME...

...ONE EVENING, THE HYPOCHONDRIAC INFORMED ME ABRUPTLY THAT LADY MADELINE WAS DEAD
...I WANT YOU TO HELP ME NOW, MY FRIEND... IN THE INTERMENT OF MY BELOVED SISTER... I WISH TO PRESERVE HER CORPSE A FORTNIGHT BEFORE SHE IS ENTOMBED...
YOU WISH WHAT? WHAT?
SHE WILL BE THEN PLACED IN ONE OF THE NUMEROUS VAULTS IN THIS BUILDING...
RODERICK... RODERICK... ANSWER ME... WHY DO YOU WISH TO WAIT SO LONG?...
...I WILL NOT TELL YOU... SAVE TO SUGGEST IT IS A TRADITION OF MY FAMILY WHICH CANNOT... OH GOD... CANNOT BE VIOLATED...
...AT THE INSISTENCE OF USHER, I AIDED HIM IN THE ARRANGEMENTS FOR THE TEMPORARY ENTOMBMENT... THE BODY HAVING BEEN ENCOFFINED, WE TWO ALONE BORE IT TO ITS REST...
...THE VAULT IN WHICH WE PLACED IT WAS SMALL, DAMP, AND ENTIRELY WITHOUT MEANS OF ADMISSION FOR LIGHT; LYING AT GREAT DEPTH (COINCIDENTALLY) DIRECTLY BELOW MY OWN SLEEPING APARTMENT...

...UPON RETIRING TO BED ON THE NIGHT OF THE SEVENTH OR EIGHTH DAY FOLLOWING THE LADY MADELINE'S DEATH, I DISTINCTLY HEARD A CERTAIN LOW AND INDEFINITE SOUNDS COME FROM BELOW...
...I DRESSED AND MADE TO EXIT MY ROOM. WHEN I WAS CONFRONTED BY USHER IN THE DOORWAY... HE WAS ATTEMPTING TO RESTRAIN HYSTERIA...
...WHAT IS IT?
...WHAT ARE THOSE SOUNDS?
...YOU HAVE NOT SEEN IT?...
...IT?...
YOU HAVE NOT THEN SEEN IT?... STAY - YOU SHALL!
...THUS SPEAKING, HE HURRIED TO A WINDOW AND THRUST IT COMPLETELY OPEN TO THE STORM WITHOUT...
...THE IMPETUOUS FURY OF THE ENTERING GUST NEARLY LIFTED US FROM OUR FEET ...BUT HIS AGITATION WAS SO UTTERLY AND UNNATURALLY COMPOUNDED BY THE FREAK LIGHTNING THAT I THOUGHT HE WAS LOSING ALL HOLD ON HIS SANITY...

YOU MUST NOT- YOU SHALL NOT BEHOLD THIS! THESE ARE MERELY ELECTRICAL PHENOMENA WHICH IN THEIR GHASTLY ORIGIN STARTLE YOU...
...NOTHING MORE...

...HE REFUSED TO LET ME SHUT OUT THE STORM... BUT LET ME READ TO HIM TO ATTEMPT TO CALM HIM... I READ FROM THE ANTIQUE VOLUME OF SIR LANCELOT CANNING... THE "MAD TRIST..."
WHO ENTERETH HEREIN, A CONQUEROR HATH BIN; WHO SLAYETH THE DRAGON, THE SHIELD HE SHALL WIN;...
YOU DO NOT HEAR IT... DO YOU?

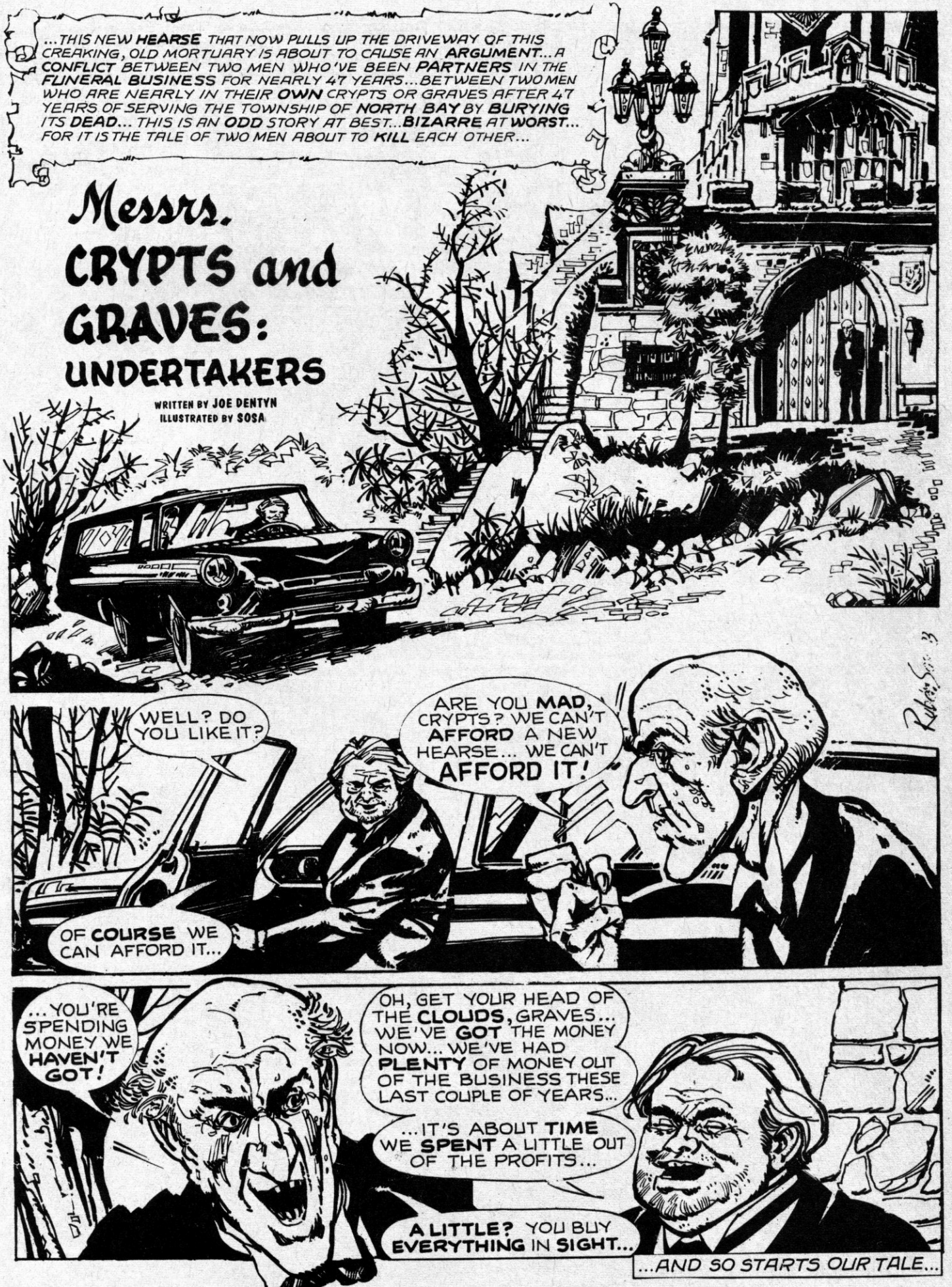
...I COULD NO LONGER READ, HIS RAVINGS WERE BEYOND CONTROL...
...I HAVE HEARD IT... LONG-LONG-LONG-MANY MINUTES, MANY HOURS, MANY DAYS HAVE I HEARD IT-YET I DARED NOT-OH, PITY ME, MISERABLE WRETCH THAT I AM!...
...I DARED NOT- I DARED NOT SPEAK!

...AND NOW TONIGHT... THE DEATH-CRY OF THE DRAGON, THE CLANGOUR OF THE SHIELD - SAY, RATHER... THE RENDING OF HER COFFIN, AND THE GRATING OF THE IRON HINGES OF HER PRISON. SHE STRUGGLES WITHIN THE COPPERED ARCHWAY OF THE VAULT... OH DO I NOT DISTINGUISH THAT HEAVY AND HORRIBLE BEATING OF HER HEART?...

...HERE HE SPRANG FURIOUSLY TO HIS FEET, AND SHRIEKED OUT HIS SYLLABLES, AS IF IN THE EFFORT HE WERE GIVING UP HIS SOUL:
MADMAN! MADMAN! I TELL YOU THAT SHE NOW STANDS WITHOUT THE DOOR!...

...THE STORM, AS IF TO PROVE HIS WORDS, RUSHED AGAINST THE DOOR AND RIPPED IT APART... BEHIND IT DID STAND THE LOFTY AND ENSHROUDED FIGURE OF THE
LADY MADELINE OF USHER...
...THERE WAS BLOOD UPON HER WHITE ROBES, AND EVIDENCE OF SOME BITTER STRUGGLE UPON EVERY PORTION OF HER EMACIATED FRAME...
...FOR A MOMENT SHE REMAINED TREMBLING AND REELING TO AND FRO UPON THE THRESHOLD, THEN, WITH A LOW MOANING CRY, FELL HEAVILY INWARD UPON THE PERSON OF HER BROTHER, AND IN HER VIOLENT AND NOW FINAL DEATH AGONIES, BORE HIM TO THE FLOOR A VICTIM TO THE VERY TERRORS HE HAD ANTICIPATED...

"...FROM THAT CHAMBER, AND FROM THAT MANSION, I FLED AGHAST..."
"...SUDDENLY THERE SHOT ALONG THE PATH A LIGHT, AND I TURNED TO SEE WHENCE A GLEAM SO UNUSUAL COULD HAVE ISSUED; FOR THE VAST HOUSE AND ITS SHADOWS WERE ALONE BEHIND ME...THE RADIANCE WAS THAT OF THE FULL, SETTING, AND BLOOD-RED MOON WHICH NOW SHONE VIVIDLY THROUGH THAT ONCE BARELY-DISCERNIBLE FISSURE OF WHICH I HAVE BEFORE SPOKEN AS EXTENDING FROM THE ROOF OF THE BUILDING, IN A ZIGZAG DIRECTION, TO THE BASE...WHILE I GAZED, THIS FISSURE RAPIDLY WIDENED - THERE CAME A FIERCE BREATH OF THE WHIRLWIND - THERE WAS A LONG TUMULTUOUS SHOUTING SOUND LIKE THE VOICE OF A THOUSAND WATERS..."
"...AND THE DEEP AND DANK TARN AT MY FEET CLOSED SUDDENLY AND SILENTLY OVER THE FRAGMENTS OF... THE HOUSE OF USHER..."


...THIS NEW HEARSE THAT NOW PULLS UP THE DRIVEWAY OF THIS CREAKING, OLD MORTUARY IS ABOUT TO CAUSE AN ARGUMENT... A CONFLICT BETWEEN TWO MEN WHO'VE BEEN PARTNERS IN THE FUNERAL BUSINESS FOR NEARLY 47 YEARS... BETWEEN TWO MEN WHO ARE NEARLY IN THEIR OWN CRYPTS OR GRAVES AFTER 47 YEARS OF SERVING THE TOWNSHIP OF NORTH BAY BY BURYING ITS DEAD... THIS IS AN ODD STORY AT BEST... BIZARRE AT WORST... FOR IT IS THE TALE OF TWO MEN ABOUT TO KILL EACH OTHER...
Messrs. CRYPTS and GRAVES: UNDERTAKERS
WRITTEN BY JOE DENTYN
ILLUSTRATED BY SOSA
WELL? DO YOU LIKE IT?
ARE YOU MAD, CRYPTS? WE CAN'T AFFORD A NEW HEARSE... WE CAN'T AFFORD IT!
OF COURSE WE CAN AFFORD IT...
...YOU'RE SPENDING MONEY WE HAVEN'T GOT!
OH, GET YOUR HEAD OF THE CLOUDS, GRAVES... WE'VE GOT THE MONEY NOW... WE'VE HAD PLENTY OF MONEY OUT OF THE BUSINESS THESE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS...
...IT'S ABOUT TIME WE SPENT A LITTLE OUT OF THE PROFITS...
A LITTLE? YOU BUY EVERYTHING IN SIGHT...
...AND SO STARTS OUR TALE...

OH, DON'T EXAGGERATE SO MUCH, ED... YOU GO TO SUCH AN EXTREME...
DON'T YOU REMEMBER HOW WE WORKED TO GET WHERE WE ARE TODAY? DON'T YOU REMEMBER THE AWFUL THINGS WE HAD TO DO JUST TO KEEP THE BUSINESS OUT OF THE RED...
"... YOU KNOW HOW WE HAD TO SCRIMP AND CHEAT ON EVERYTHING... THOSE COFFINS WE USED TO SELL AS HIGH-PRICED WALNUT AND OAK WERE NOTHING BUT CHEAP, WOOD-STAINED PINE BOXES..."
"... AND THE WAY WE'D FIX UP THE BODIES... SAVE A FEW CENTS ON EMBALMING FLUID... WE'D JUST PUT THE CORPSES IN THEIR GRAVE WITHOUT ANY PREPARATIONS AT ALL EVEN THOUGH WE WERE PAID FOR IT..."
"... AND WE'D ROB THE BODY OF RINGS AND GOLD TEETH AND ANYTHING THAT WAS WORTH ANYTHING... AFTER THE FUNERAL SERVICE WE'D EVEN TAKE THE CLOTHES OFF TO SELL..."
"... YES... I REMEMBER THAT TOO, GRAVES... I EVEN REMEMBER WHAT TROUBLE WE'D GO TO WITH A BODY TO BE CREMATED... WHILE THE BEREAVED THOUGHT THEIR BELOVED WAS BEING BURNED, I'D BE INSIDE THE CREMATORIUM TAKING THE COFFIN AND THE CLOTHES AND JEWELLERY OUT THE HIDDEN EXIT... ALL WE'D BURN WAS THE NAKED CORPSE..."

...THEN YOU DO REMEMBER...
...YES, I REMEMBER... BUT I DON'T SEE WHAT THIS HAS TO DO WITH US NOW... IN 1973 THIS IS A THRIVING BUSINESS... WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THE THINGS WE DID THE OLD DAYS... THESE DAYS WE HAVE MONEY... CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND THAT?
"ALL I UNDERSTAND IS THAT IF YOU'RE NOT CAREFUL WE'LL HAVE TO GO BACK TO THOSE OLD DAYS... REMEMBER WE DEVELOPED THAT 'DEATH POTION' WE'D SLIP INTO SOMEONE'S DRINK AT A PARTY? THEY WOULD APPEAR DEAD THO THEY WERE ONLY DRUGGED..."
"... THE FAMILY WOULD MAKE ARRANGEMENTS FOR A FUNERAL AND PAY FOR OUR SERVICES... WE'D 'DISCOVER' HE HAS ONLY IN A STATE OF COMA AND THE FAMILY WOULD BE SO ELATED AT THE RECOVERY THAT THEY'D NEVER EVEN ASK FOR THEIR MONEY BACK..."
WE DON'T HAVE TO DO THAT ANYMORE, GRAVES... WE CAN AFFORD ALL THE HEARSES WE WANT... TOMORROW WORKMEN ARE ARRIVING TO INSTALL A NEW CREMATORIUM...
...ONE THAT WORKS PROPERLY...
...HE'LL RUIN US... I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM OR HE'LL DRIVE US TO POVERTY AGAIN...
...I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM...
...I'VE GOT TO KILL HIM...

...I KNOW EXACTLY HOW... HES'S ALWAYS LOOKING FOR AN EXCUSE TO HAVE A DRINK...
...TONIGHT THE DRINK HE DRINKS WILL BE HIS LAST...
RAT POISON
...HIS DRINK WILL BE SPIKED...
...IT'LL KILL HIM...
KILL ME...?
...SO... GRAVES WANTS TO END OUR PARTNERSHIP WANTS TO POISON ME...
HE'S LEAVING FOR A MOMENT TO ANSWER THE TELEPHONE... NOW IS MY OPPORTUNITY TO FIND OUT HOW HE'S GOING TO DO IT...
RAT POISON?
RAT POISON
...WELL THAT'S EASILY FIXED... I'LL POUR THE RAT POISON DOWN THE DRAIN AND SUBSTITUTE SOME OF THE "DEATH POTION" WE USED TO USE...
...I'LL FAKE DEATH AND WHEN I COME BACK TO LIFE GIVE HIM A HEART ATTACK...
...THEN... I'LL KILL HIM...
...OH... I HEAR HIM COMING...

NOW... THIS'LL KEEP THOSE RATS FROM COMING OUT AT NIGHT AND CHEWING THE BODIES...
...FILTHY THINGS... RAT POISON IS TOO GOOD FOR THEM... THEY SHOULD ALL BE TORTURED TO DEATH...
NOW... I CAN PREPARE ANOTHER BEAKER TO KILL OFF CRYPTS...
...AT OUR 'PARTY' TONIGHT... THE NAIVE FOOL WILL NEVER KNOW WHAT HIT HIM...
CARE FOR A DRING TO CELEBRATE OUR SUCCESS?
...MY SUCCESS AND YOUR DEATH...
SURE, ED...
...HE THINKS HE'S KILLING ME... HAH, HAH... WHEN THE DRUG I SUBSTITUTED WEARS OFF HE'LL HAVE A HEART ATTACK...
OH, MY GOD...
...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE TO ME?...WHAT DID YOU DO?...
...VERY FAST-ACTING THAT STUFF...
WHAT...DID... YOU...DO?
...I JUST KILLED YOU IS WHAT I DID OLD PARTNER...

...NOW... I HAVE A LITTLE PROBLEM...
...I GOTTA FIGURE OUT HOW TO HIDE YOU...
I COULD HAVE BURNED YOU TO A CRISP IN THE CREMATORIUM BUT YOU HAD TO HAVE IT DISMANTLED IN PREPARATION FOR THE NEW ONE TO BE BUILT...
SO I GUESS I'LL JUST HAVE TO WALL YOU UP, OLD FRIEND...
...I'M SURE YOU DON'T MIND... DO YOU?
DOESN'T MAKE MUCH DIFFERENCE TO YOU WHETHER YOU'RE BURNED OR WALLED UP...
... TOO BAD...
...WE... HAD BECOME VERY CLOSE HADN'T WE...
...OVER THE YEARS...
...OVER ALL THOSE YEARS...
NOW IS A LITTLE LATE TO FEEL REGRET, GRAVES...

MY GOD... WHAT...
...I SUBSTITUTED THE 'DEATH DRUG' FOR YOUR RAT POISON, ED...
...NOW IT'S YOUR TURN TO DIE...
MY HEART... OH, LORD, MY HEART...
DAMNIT... HE'S NOT DEAD... THE SHOCK DIDN'T KILL HIM...
...WELL...
...WELL, I... I SUPPOSE IT DOESN'T MATTER REALLY...
Ruben Sosa 73
I'LL JUST DO THE SAME TO HIM AS HE WAS ABOUT TO DO TO ME...
...I'LL WALL HIM UP...
...SO LONG, PARTNER...
...SO LONG, OLD BUDDY...
...REST IN PEACE...

OH...UGH, UGH...
...SO...HE IS BURIED BUT NOT YET DEAD...
CRYPTS... CRYPTS...WHAT HAVE YOU DONE...
WHAT HAVE I DONE?... HAA, HAA... DONE TO YOU WHAT YOU TRIED TO DO TO ME, GRAVES...
HAHAHAHA
...YOU SEE I DISCOVERED YOUR PLAN, GRAVES... I SUBSTITUTED OUR 'DEATH POTION' FOR YOUR RAT POISON...
...YOU GONE MAD IN THERE, GRAVES?
...CRYPTS, YOU OLD FOOL... THAT RAT POISON WASN'T FOR YOU... THAT WAS FOR THE RATS... YOUR POISON HAS A MUCH SLOWER EFFECT... I WONDERED WHY YOU DIED ON THE SPOT... THE POISON I GAVE YOU TAKES MANY HOURS TO TAKE EFFECT...
...WHAT POISON?
...EMBALMING FLUID...
...EMBALMING FLUID?...
...THE GRAVES AND CRYPTS MORTUARY IS NO MORE... FOR THE PROPIETORS ARE NO MORE... ONE IS DEAD BEHIND A WALL... THE OTHER IS DEAD ON HIS FEET... THO THE YEARS WILL KNOW THEIR DUE ON THE BONES OF THE MAN GRAVES BEHIND THE WALL, WHOSE BONES AND FLESH WILL CRUMBLE TO DUST... THE BONES AND FLESH OF THE MAN CRYPTS WILL ENDURE FOR THEY'VE BEEN PREPARED FOR INMORTALITY BY THE SKILLED FINGERS OF THE GREATEST MORTICIANS OF THEM ALL... MESSRS. FATE AND FATE...

HORROR PREVIEW CONTEST

. . . can you fill in the missing VOICE BALLOONS ? The best 5 entries we receive will WIN an advance copy of the next issue . . . get your entry in FAST and you can become a WINNER . . .

MAIL TO:
SKYWALD CONTEST # 2 RM 1501
18 EAST 41st. ST., NEW YORK CITY, N.Y. 10017

NAME _____

ADDRESS _____

CITY _____ STATE _____ ZIP _____

NOSFERATU

WAS

the name originally used by film-maker F. W. Murnau, in the 1922 silent film based on Bram Stoker's DRACULA novel . . . our TALES OF NOSFERATU series in every SCREAM has nothing to do with the original NOSFERATU — COUNT ORLOK — character (but then again, NOSFERATU will tell his OWN tale in chapter TWELVE of the series, so WHO KNOWS what his ORIGIN will be?) . . . in the next issue of PSYCHO (#16 — on sale next month); film buff EMOTIONALLY-DISTURBED ED FEDORY will present a SPECIAL PHOTO/MOVIE/REVIEW of NOSFERATU . . . miss it not . . . it's WEIRD . . .

" . . . this UNDEAD menace does not kill his victims by one mere pair of fang punctures . . .No . . . like some grotesque LEECH in HUMAN FORM, he saps the life-blood of his prey over a long period of time . . . "

. . . from ED FEDORY'S review of NOSFERATU . . .

...THIS...IS NOSFERATU...
...THESE MASKED 'MEN' WHO FLANK HIM AT THIS DEGENERATE 'SUPPER' ARE GUESTS COME TO TELL THEIR TALES...COME, ONE BY ONE, FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD TO SPEAK OF THEIR MISERABLE LIVES AND LOVES..2 HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN... ONE WHO ONCE-UPON-A-TIME WAS DRACULA... AND ANOTHER, WHO UNTIL LATE WAS A MASTER OF THE VOODOO... HIS NAME WAS SINNER CANE... AND HIS NAME MEANS EVIL...

...NOW IT IS TIME FOR ANOTHER TO SPEAK... MYSTERIOUSLY MASKED IN A FROG'S HEAD... HIS VOICE IS DEEP-THROATED AND GUTTERAL AND OCCASIONALLY HE PAUSES TO CHOKE...

...HIS NAME, OF NO CONSEQUENCE TO THIS TALE, IS CHARLES FREEMAN... AND HE IS... AN AMERICAN...
...THIS IS HIS TALE...
...BUT THEN AGAIN, IT IS ALSO:

The Tale of Another NOSFERATU... CHAPTER 3

WRITTEN BY ALAN HEWETSON
ILLUSTRATED BY ZESAR

...SPEAK...
WHY?
WHY??
...YES... WHY?
...YOU'VE BROUGHT US HERE TO THIS WRETCHED PLACE... MADE US WEAR THESE MASKS...
...AND YOU'VE GIVEN US NO REASON ... WE ALL DEMAND TO KNOW WHY WE ARE HERE AND WHY WE ARE... 'CONFESSING' ...OUR LIFE STORIES TO YOU...

YOU ARE HERE BECAUSE...
...I ORDERED YOUR PRESENCE...
...YOU SPEAK YOUR TALES BECAUSE...
...I ORDER YOU TO SPEAK...
THOSE ARE THE REASONS...
...THE ONLY REASONS YOU'LL GET... UNTIL I JUDGE THAT FURTHER EXPLANATIONS ARE IN ORDER...
...BUT FOR NOW CHARLES FREEMAN... IT IS MERELY ENOUGH THAT WHEN I ORDER YOU TO SPEAK YOU DO...
...THEN...
...I WILL SPEAK...
...THE SWAMPS THAT INFEST CERTAIN AREAS ON THIS EARTH ARE NUMEROUS... BUT NO SWAMP IS AS FAMOUS AS THE MIGHTY AMERICAN EVERGLADES... MY HOME...

...I AM WHAT IS AMBIGUOUSLY CALLED A SWAMP-NATIVE... BORN AND BRED IN THOSE FETID AREAS OF MAGNIFICENT MARSHES THAT MOST MEN FOOLISHLY CALL DEGENERATE WASTELAND... MY PROFESSION IS THAT OF A HUNTER... I SEARCH OUT THE SWAMP'S BIGGEST AND MOST POWERFUL GATORS AND SLAUGHTER THEM... FOR SALE TO WOMEN THROUGHOUT THE WORLD AS HANDBAGS... AND TO MEN AS SHOES... A LUCRATIVE PROFESSION WHILE IT LASTED, BUT IN RECENT YEARS AGAINST THE LAW BECAUSE OF CONTEMPORARY MORALITIES WHICH SAY THE LIFE OF ANY BEAST IS MORE PRECIOUS THAN SUCH CHILDISH EXTRAVAGANCIES...

...AND SO, MY LEGITIMATE INCOME AT AN END, I WAS FORCED TO RENT MYSELF OUT AS A GUIDE TO 'SPORTSMEN' WHO CHOSE TO IGNORE THE LAW AND SEEK GAME IN THOSE SWAMPLANDS...
...IN THAT CAPACITY, IT WAS MY... MIS-FORTUNE... TO MEET A MAN CALLED NICHOLAS DICKENS...
... FREEMAN...
...LATER TONIGHT I WANT TO SPEAK TO YOU... ALONE...
...WHY?...
...BECAUSE WHAT I HAVE TO SAY HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH THE OTHERS...
...THE OTHERS WHOM I HARDLY KNOW...
...HARDLY KNOW?... BUT... I THOUGHT YOU WERE ALL FRIENDS...
... NOT UNTIL A FEW DAYS AGO...
...HOW DID YOUR... YOUR FACE GET TO BE THE WAY IT IS...
AN ACCIDENT... WHILE ON A SAFARI IN AFRICA A FEW YEARS AGO I WAS MAULED BY A RHINO...
YOU SEE FREEMAN... I'D HEARD ABOUT YOUR REPUTATION...
...ONE WHICH IS, SHALL I SAY, 'CONDUCTIVE' TO MY NEEDS AND WANTS...
...BUT I DIDN'T KNOW IF YOU COULD BE TRUSTED... I CONTRIVED TO COME ALONG ON THIS HUNT, ONE I ADMIT THAT I FIND POINTLESS AND IMMORAL, TO SEE IF YOU WERE IN FACT THE MAN FOR THE JOB...
...IF YOU ARE SO CONCERNED WITH WHAT IS MORAL AND WHAT IS NOT... THEN WHY SEEK OUT ME TO DO THIS... 'JOB' ...FOR YOU...
...IT DOESN'T MATTER... ALL THAT MATTERS IS THE JOB FREEMAN...
WHAT WOULD YOU SAY IF I WANTED YOU TO GET ME A TRUNK HIDDEN UNDER THE SWAMP-MUD HEREABOUTS...
...A TRUNK?... WHAT COULD BE SO IMPORTANT ABOUT A TRUNK?
...INSIDE THAT TRUNK...
...IS 2 MILLION DOLLARS!

...OH SURE...
...IN A PIRATE'S TRUNK I SUPPOSE...
...IT... WOULD BE TO YOUR ADVANTAGE TO TAKE ME SERIOUSLY CHARLES FREEMAN...
...BECAUSE A SHARE OF THAT GOLD IS YOURS IF YOU GET IT UP AND OUT OF THERE FOR ME... YOUR SHARE WOULD BE 10%...
...DO YOU KNOW WHAT 10% OF 2 MILLION DOLLARS IS?...
DOES $200,000 FOR TAKING A TRUNK OUT OF A SWAMP SEEM LIKE A FAIR PRICE TO YOU?
...YES...
... IT'S MY GRANDFATHER'S... HE STOLE IT DURING THE GREAT CIVIL WAR FROM THE UNION ARMY...
...HE WAS A REB MAJOR... HE LED HIS MEN AGAINST A PAY-MASTER'S TRAIN HEADED FOR FORT LUKE... THE MONEY WAS ABOUT 5 MONTHS BACK-PAY FOR HALF THE UNION ARMY WHO'D BEEN FIGHTING IN THE SOUTH...
...THAT'S A HELLUVA RAID... HOWCUM I NEVER HEARD ABOUT IT?
... IT WAS SUPPOSED TO GO INTO THE COFFERS OF THE REB ARMY... BUT MY GRANDDADY DECIDED HIS LOYALTIES MIGHT BE A BIT DISPLACED WHEN 2 MILLION DOLLARS WERE AT STAKE...
...SO HE AND ABOUT 4 OTHERS STOLE AWAY FROM THE REGIMENT ONE NIGHT WITH THE TRUNK AND THREW IT INTO THE SWAMP.. AND... THERE WAS SO MUCH SUSPICION ABOUT THEM THEY NEVER CAME BACK...
BESIDES, MY GRANDFATHER WAS THE ONLY ONE WHO SURVIVED THE WAR ANYWAY...
...DIDN'T HE TELL YOUR FATHER? WHY DIDN'T HE COME BACK?...
... MY FATHER NEVER BELIEVED HIM...
... BUT I DO... AND I BELIEVE THIS MAP TOO...
LISSEN FREEMAN...
...WHAT IF THAT THING AIN'T DOWN THERE...
...WHAT AM I SUPPOSED TO DO ABOUT A FEE... FOR MY TROUBLE?
...YOUR FEE IS A FINDER'S FEE FREEMAN... IF YOU DON'T FIND ANYTHING... YOU DON'T GET A FEE...

...THAT ELECTRICAL CABLE IS MY LIFE-LINE DICKENS
...YES... I KNOW IT IS...
...IT MUST BE KEPT TAUT AT ALL TIMES... AND... IF I TUG ON IT TWICE... YOU MUST PULL ME UP IMMEDIATELY...
...YES... I KNOW...
...I LET MYSELF DOWN IN THE SWAMP-MUD... AND IMMEDIATELY BEGAN TO SINK...
...I HAD EXPERIENCE BEFORE THIS AS A FROGMAN IN THE NAVY, BUT NOTHING I HAD EXPERIENCED BEFORE COULD COMPARE TO THIS...
...AS MY HEAD SUNK UNDER THE SURFACE I FELT LIKE I WAS DYING, THOUGH I COULD STILL BREATHE ...IT WAS LIKE BEING IN HELL BUT BEING STILL ALIVE...
...I FELT LIKE AN ANIMAL... A CREATURE WHO WAS NATIVE TO THESE WRETCHED WATERS... LIKE... A REAL FROG, SOMEHOW POSSESSED OF THE HUMAN ABILITY TO THINK AND REASON... AND AT THAT MOMENT, I WONDERED IF TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS WAS ENOUGH...
...THEN THE THING GRABBED MY ANKLE...

...THE THING WAS UNKNOWN TO SCIENCE... IT WAS A THING THAT HAD LIVED HERE UNDER THE EVERGLADES UNCOUNTED YEARS... BREEDING AND EXISTING HERE WITHOUT CAUSE TO LEAVE... WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ***HUMANITY*** EVEN AS WE ARE WITHOUT KNOWLEDGE OF ***IT***... FOR WHO BEFORE ***I*** HAD A ***REASON*** TO VENTURE ***UNDER*** THE ***SWAMP***... WHO BEFORE ***I*** WAS ***MAD*** ENOUGH TO ATTEMPT ***SUICIDE*** IN SUCH A ***LUNATIC MANNER***...

...THE THING 'RESTED' NEAR WHAT APPEARED TO BE THE ***'TRUNK'*** THAT DICKENS SEARCHED FOR... IT SQUATTED BESIDE IT LIKE A ***GUARD*** ON ***SENTRY-DUTY***...

...THE THING DID NOT ***MOVE*** WHEN IT SAW ME... BUT AS I ***STARED*** AT THE GROTESQUERY MY ***MIND*** BECAME ***CLUTTERED*** WITH THOUGHTS THAT... THAT WEREN'T ***MINE***... THAT WERE ***EXTERNAL*** IN ***ORIGIN***... THOUGHTS THAT SEEMED TO COME AT ME FROM THE ***BEAST ITSELF***...

...MY MIND IS BURSTING... LIKE... SOMETHING IS TRYING TO... COMMUNICATE BY THOUGHT WAVES
...DO NOT FIGHT ME CHARLES FREEMAN... LET ME INTO YOUR MIND...
I AM HERE FOR A SINGLE REASON... TO WARN YOU THAT NICHOLAS DICKENS IS A FRAUD...
... A FRAUD?...
...WHATEVER 'STORY' HE TOLD YOU OF THIS TRUNK IS FALSE... THERE IS SOMETHING IN THIS TRUNK OF FAR MORE VALUE TO HIM THAN WHATEVER HE OFFERED YOU FOR IT... GO BACK... GIVE UP YOUR ATTEMPTS TO WREST THIS TRUNK FROM MY GUARD... FOR THE ONLY WAY TO GET IT... IS TO KILL ME...
OVER YOUR DEAD BODY CREEP...
... FOR SOMETHING MORE VALUABLE THAN TWO MILLION DOLLARS I'D FIGHT SATAN HIMSELF...
ZZZZMMZMZZMZM

...DID YOU GET THE TRUNK FREEMAN?
...IT'S ON THE END OF THE CABLE... HAUL IT UP DICKENS... ...WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL ME THE TRUTH.?..
...SO...THE EMISSARY WAS DOWN THERE...
...THE WHUT... THE EMISSARY.?..
...THE REPRESENTATIVE OF...SATAN!
WHAT?
...BEFORE YOU TOUCH THAT TRUNK DICKENS...BEFORE YOU EVEN LOOK AT IT I WANNA HEAR AN EXPLANATION...
...THE TRUTH...
...NEVER MIND AN EXPLANATION... FORGET IT... FORGET THE TRUNK...
...HERE IS YOUR MONEY... ALL OF WHAT I PROMISED YOU...
...THAT AIN'T ENOUGH DICKENS... I WANNA KNOW WHAT'S IN THAT TRUNK...
...OH NO YOU DON'T...
...OH YES AH DO...
...OH YES AH DO...

...WELL?..
...IT'S NOT THE END OF THE STORY THO... WHAT WAS IN THAT TRUNK?...
THAT'S IT... THAT'S MY STORY...
...WHAT WUS IN THE TRUNK?...
WHY... I WAS IN THE TRUNK...
...MY DEAD CORPSE...
...YOUR STORY IS... NOT CLEAR FREEMAN...
... MAKE US AN EXPLANATION...
...THIS WAS NOT AS MUCH MY STORY AS IT WAS THE TALE OF ANOTHER...
...A MAN NAMED NICHOLAS DICKENS...
...IT WAS NOT CLEAR TO ME EITHER AS I FIRST SAW MYSELF... BUT THEN THE AWFUL TRUTH BECAME TERRIBLY CLEAR...
... IT APPEARS SATAN HIMSELF WAS OUT TO TORTURE DICKENS... HE KEPT HIS SOUL FROM HIM IN THAT UNOBTAINABLE BOX GUARDED BY HIS EMISSARY... THE 'THING' UNDER THE SWAMP WATERS...
...DICKENS COULD NOT DIE TILL THAT TRUNK WAS RETRIEVED... HE COULD NOT GET AT IT, ONLY ANOTHER MAN COULD... THAT OTHER MAN WAS ME... AND WHEN I DEFEATED THE 'THING' AND KILLED DICKENS I DID HIM THE GREATEST 'FAVOR' THAT ANY MAN COULD DO ANOTHER... I TOOK HIS PLACE...
... OF COURSE, YOU ASK HOW I KNOW THESE AWFUL FACTS WHEN THEY WERE NOT PRESENTED TO ME...

...WELL YOU SEE... THEY WERE PRESENTED TO ME...
... BY SATAN HIMSELF... HE APPEARED BEFORE ME IN THAT PLACE AND TOLD ME DICKENS' TALE... AND TOLD ME THAT AT ANOTHER TIME IN THE PAST SOMETIME HE HAD REPLACED ANOTHER MAN... WHO HAD REPLACED ANOTHER...
...AND UNTIL I REPLACE MYSELF IN THAT COFFIN-TRUNK WITH THE SOUL OF ANOTHER...
...I AM AS HALF-DEAD AND HALF-ALIVE AS YOU SEE ME NOW...
...IN THE NEXT NOSFERATU A MACABRE BLOCKBUSTER...:
WHEN THE DUSK FALLS... SO DOES DEATH!

THESE MEN ARE NOSFERATU'S MONSTERS

...THIS...IS NOSFERATU...
...THESE MASKED 'MEN' WHO FLANK HIM AT THIS DEGENERATE 'SUPPER' ARE GUESTS COME TO TELL THEIR TALES...COME, ONE BY ONE, FROM ALL PARTS OF THE WORLD TO SPEAK OF THEIR MISERABLE LIVES AND LOVES..2 HAVE ALREADY SPOKEN... ONE WHO ONCE-UPON-A-TIME WAS DRACULA... AND ANOTHER, WHO UNTIL LATE WAS A MASTER OF THE VOODOO... HIS NAME WAS SINNER CANE... AND HIS NAME MEANS EVIL...
...NOW IT IS TIME FOR ANOTHER TO SPEAK... MYSTERIOUSLY MASKED IN A FROG'S HEAD... HIS VOICE IS DEEP-THROATED AND GUTTERAL AND OCCASIONALLY HE PAUSES TO CHOKE...
IN
SCREAM

in

NIGHTMARE

THERE ARE SO MANY MONSTERS YOU CAN'T COUNT 'EM ALL

a scene from: HELL HATH NO FACE by Ricardo Villamonte in the current NIGHTMARE